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ABSTRACT

This research paper was undertaken with three goals in mind: (1) to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding their principals' leadership styles; (2) to analyze the perceptions of principals themselves regarding their own leadership styles; and (3) to compare teachers' perceptions with those of the principals to discover discrepancies between the views of the two groups. To determine perceptions, a questionnaire was constructed and pilot-tested in the secondary schools of Cyprus. Questionnaire items were constructed mainly from a review of the literature on effective schools and effective principalship and included 57 items grouped under 9 areas: school climate, school leadership and management, administration and fiscal management, student management, professional development and inservice, relations with parents and the community, problem-solving and decision-making, curriculum development, and personnel management. An ethnographic analysis was also used. Results, grouped under the nine areas, indicate some congruence and some disagreement between the teachers and the principal regarding a principal's self-perception and teachers' perceptions. In four out of the nine areas, there is agreement of views from both sides. (An appendix includes the questionnaire.) (RJM)

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Secondary Principals in Cyprus: The Views of the Principal Versus the Views of the Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

This piece of research was undertaken with three main goals in mind: (1) to find out about the perceptions of teachers regarding their principals and their leadership styles, (2) to find out about the perceptions of principals themselves regarding their own leadership style, and (3) to compare teachers' perceptions with those of the principals and find out if there are any discrepancies between the views of the two groups of people.

The underlying (and guiding) assumption for this project is that the effectiveness of a leader is mainly depended on how others view him/her as a leader. This effectiveness is also depended on how the principals themselves perceive their leadership style. Principals may have some ideas about themselves and the way they lead their schools. They also act and perform their duties based on these ideas and also based on their perceptions of themselves as leaders. However, if their staff perceives them in different ways, then it is almost certain that the leader will have problems in performing his/her duties since his/her staff will almost certainly behave towards the principal in the way **they** (the staff) perceive the principal. If the views of the principal match the views of the staff things work out fine; if these views, however, are divergent things do not always look fine. This discrepancy of views and perceptions is usually to the detriment of the school and its students since everybody acts in different ways according to their own perceptions about what is happening in the school. It is, therefore, assumed that it is important to find out whether the teachers' views are in congruence with those of the principal regarding the principal's leadership and management of the daily affairs of the school, since all involved behave according to their **own** perceptions and not according to how things **really** are. Moreover, I would argue that whether we are ready to accept it or not, what is perceived as reality **is** what we base our actions on. Therefore, perception **is,** indeed, reality.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The methodology used in this piece of research was a mixed one combining qualitative and quantitative methods. More specifically, in March 1997, a questionnaire was constructed and pilot-tested regarding a principal's duties and style of leadership in the secondary schools of Cyprus. The questionnaire items were constructed mainly from a review of the literature on effective schools and effective principalship. The specific circumstances of secondary education in Cyprus were also taken into consideration. The questionnaire included 57 items which were placed under the following nine areas: School Climate, School Leadership and Management, Curriculum Development, Personnel

Management, Administration and Fiscal Management, Student Management, Professional Development and In-Service, Relations with Parents and the Community, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making. The complete questionnaire can be seen in its entirety in the Appendix. The questionnaire is considered to be very reliable since its reliability coefficient is: $r = 0.94$ (Cronbach's $a = 0.94$). It is also valid since a panel of experts judged it as such; therefore, face validity is assured as well. The scale used is an interval Likert-type scale from 1 to 4, where 4 indicates that the principal "always" behaves in the way described by a certain questionnaire item, 3 indicates "often", 2 indicates "sometimes", and 1 indicates "never".

The questionnaire was distributed during a day visit to every high school visited. All teachers present at the school during that day were given the questionnaire and were asked to complete it. The principal of the school and the researcher left the room when teachers were completing the questionnaire. Even with the reassurance of strict anonymity, it was evident that a number of teachers declined to respond to the questionnaire altogether, or declined to respond to demographic questions which could potentially give out their identity. In a way this is understandable due to the small size of the educational system of the island and the feeling that everybody knows you and (presumably) can tell whose questionnaire they were looking at.

Also, in this piece of research, the ethnographic approach to leadership was used (Gronn and Ribbins, 1997), i.e., observing, shadowing and interviewing the principals. In a way, a multiperspective approach was used following Argyris's distinction between espoused theories and theories-in-use in order to find out whether what the principals say they do is what is actually perceived as what it is they do. After the questionnaires were collected, the semi-structured interview process began with the principals. The areas that were discussed were similar and/or identical to those of the questionnaire in order to be able to make certain comparisons and draw some conclusions about possible discrepancies between what the teachers perceived and what the principal thought of herself.

Also, following Seddon's (1994) distinction of context between categorical, interpretive, and relational, I would argue that this piece of research tries to construe meanings within the interpretive or constructivist approach of context, i.e., based on the premise that it is indeed important to find out what organizational members' conceptions of reality are (Newmann, 1995). Therefore, it is hoped that through comparison and contrast of all the available evidence, we should be able to arrive to more objective accounts on the principalship. In the case presented in this study, the researcher spent a total of about 12

hours with this particular principal during three different visits. The results which follow are based on interviews with this one principal and the school teachers' responses to the questionnaire. The demographic data concerning the school have been slightly changed in order to avoid the school or the principal being identified.

The school and the principal

The school is an urban Lyceum (high school which includes the last 3 grades). The school has around 700 students and 62 teaching personnel out of which one is the principal, 11 are assistant principals and the rest are teachers. Forty-three questionnaires were completed which corresponds to about 70% of all the staff. This return rate is considered to be very good and quite representative of the teaching staff in this school.

The principal is a female in her mid-50s who has a total of 3 years of experience as a principal and about 25 years of classroom experience as a teacher. The principal is required to teach about six 45-minute periods per week, therefore, acting as a part-time teacher as well. The demographics regarding this principal are very similar for all other secondary school principals in the educational system of Cyprus, i.e., after a long and (usually) successful career as a classroom teacher (for about 20-25 years) some of them are promoted into leadership positions when they are close to retirement which is 60 years old.

Key years in the principal's career

1974-78 when she worked as a teacher in her former high school which she had attended as a student. She was very emotional about the whole issue.

1979 when she became very sick and almost totally lost her voice and therefore, she was horrified of the idea of loosing her job or having to stop teaching all together.

1981 when she became an assistant principal.

1994 when she became a principal.

Another important year in her career was when her daughter was 3 years old and became sick and told her mother how happy she was for being sick because in this way, "she has her mom with her all the time". She was so moved and felt so guilty that this prevented her from ever wanting to go back to university or get any more credentials

which would help her enormously with her job-performance and future promotions. Therefore, she never got an advanced degree even though she would have loved it.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

First, the questionnaire responses were analyzed in order to find out what the teachers thought of the principal, i.e., what their perception was about the school principal with regards to all 57 items. The presentation of the results will be as follows: For each questionnaire area the items with the highest and lowest scores will be presented concerning the principal's performance, as perceived by the responding personnel. Between the highest and lowest items, the comments of the principal will be presented about how **she** sees herself regarding that particular area.

1. School Climate

In the area of School Climate, the principal received the highest marks in item #4 (mean = 3.44), where it is stated that the principal leaves great autonomy to teachers to organize and plan their teaching. Based on the teachers' responses, it seems that they actually enjoy this kind of autonomy to a great extent (often or always based on the scale used).

This view is in agreement with the way the principal sees herself (under the circumstances which exist in Cyprus), since she mentions that the curriculum is a given by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and, therefore, there is little anyone can do about this; however, the principal sees to it that each teacher teaches according to their own style and preferred teaching methodology and this is the minimum she can do (i.e., accord this freedom to them as she mentioned during the interview) since the teachers are so much tied up and controlled with regards to everything else in such a highly centralized system as Cyprus's educational system is.

The item which received the lowest marks in the area of "School Climate" is the item regarding "whether the principal takes initiatives and supports such programs which facilitate the creation of a positive and humane work environment" (item #8, mean = 2.83). However, even this score is not really low since 2.83 is close to 3 which in the scale used stands for "often".

Again, this view is, to a great extent, in agreement with how the principal sees herself. She considers "good human relations" as one of her strongest personality characteristics.

Here is what she said: "In the 30 or so years that I have been in the schools, I believe that there is not a single instance where I was in conflict with anyone without them realizing (and knowing) that I had a valid reason for being angry or for not agreeing with them. This means that they had been convinced by my arguments and that in the end we separated with no hard feelings".

To further illustrate her efforts to create a humane work environment this is what she mentioned: "There was this teacher whose brother-in-law had cancer and was dying. Someone had to be with him at all times. She wanted every Friday to have half of her teaching periods off so that she can be with him in the hospital in order that her sister could be with her children. I made sure that I arranged it, and another teacher agreed to perform her duties."

There were also numerous other examples concerning student discipline which the principal mentioned. Those examples do indicate a humane perception of what leadership is all about with regards to both the teaching staff as well as the students. In general, all eight items in this category received an overall mean of 3.05 which means that the principal often exhibits the behaviors described in these items in her leadership style, as perceived by her staff.

2. School Leadership and Management

In this area of the questionnaire, the principal received the highest marks in item #15 (mean = 3.39) which refers to the extent to which the principal closely cooperates and contributes to the work of the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the Republic.

This view is again in accordance with how the principal sees herself since she really knew the laws governing the schools of Cyprus as was indicated during our conversation. To closely cooperate and contribute to the work of the MOE in Cyprus really means to know the legalities of the bureaucracy involved and adhere to all laws and regulations in an almost religious fashion. She also knew the list of 37 duties for principals, as stated in Cyprus statute, and mentioned that she always wanted to be within the letter of the law. This view of course is a must for anyone working within the Cyprus system since the island's educational system is highly centralized and highly bureaucratized and any deviation from what the law stipulates is considered a heresy.

The principal received lowest marks in item #13 (mean = 2.31) which refers to the amount of support she gives for experimentation and innovations at her school. The

teachers' perception is that she "sometimes" lends such support. This view is not really unusual since teachers in Cyprus are over-burdened with the huge curriculum they need to cover in a particular grade and all they can do is "rush to cover the subject area." Therefore, there is no time or room for experimentation. Furthermore, the educational system of Cyprus does not sanction any experimentation unless it is decided centrally for the introduction of an innovation of some sort, i.e., computers in education.

Thus, even the fact that this principal sometimes allows for experimentation in her school is really good news under the circumstances described before. The perception among staff is also that she uses position authority as opposed to expertise in her leadership style. This is indicated by the relatively low mean score concerning item #14 (mean = 2.62) which states that "the principal's power is mainly presented through his/her knowledge and abilities other than through his/her position authority". This is in slight disagreement with her own statements during the interview, that "she can be easily swayed and convinced by anyone who has strong arguments and that she doesn't really use the authority vested in the principalship".

3. Curriculum Development

The item in which the principal received the highest marks in this area is item #20 (mean = 3.37) which refers to the extent that the principal effectively directs and integrates programs designed for children with special needs with regular school programs. Apparently, the principal goes out of her way to accommodate students with special needs which is a rare phenomenon for Cyprus high schools since teachers and principals alike are not really trained or otherwise equipped or assisted to deal with such cases. Special education provision in secondary schools in Cyprus is almost non-existent or is at its infancy.

The principal received low marks in item #17 (mean = 2.88) which refers to the extent that the principal strives for the constant renewal of programs in order to respond to students' needs. However, the mean score in this item is not that low and it really indicates "often" which, in a centralized system such as the one in Cyprus, is indeed a very high score. This is very important because it indicates that the principal tries her best to ensure that academic program offerings are renewed in order to respond to students' needs to the extent that anyone principal can control this process in Cyprus.

Overall, the principal received a mean score of 3.17 in the area of Curriculum Development which is indeed a good score bearing in mind the highly centralized system

of Cyprus. These views of the teachers are in accordance with the principal's perceptions about herself when she mentions that "OK, I have a given curriculum, however, the teachers are quite free to work on their own, produce their own materials and use their own teaching methods which they consider more suitable. After all, they are the experts!!"

4. Personnel Management

In this area, the principal received the highest marks (but not that high) in item #24 (mean = 2.80), which refers to the extent to which her expectations with regards to personnel performance in terms of teaching strategies, classroom management and communication with the public, are clear to the teachers. Apparently, as measured on the scale used in the questionnaire, there are mixed feelings among personnel that her expectations are not really as clear as they could have been.

For this area, the principal's perception does not fully agree with that of the teachers". The principal thinks that she is clear about her expectations from her teachers. In the interview she mentioned that she always makes an effort to let a teacher know exactly what she thought of the teaching session she observed without beautifying the situation and, thus, letting the teacher know exactly how the lesson went and what she thought the strong or the weak points were. In this way, the principal thought that she made her expectations and her standards quite clear. For instance, she said, "first of all, I will let the teacher know that I am going to observe her/him even though (by law) I do not have to give them any warning that I am coming into their classrooms. Then, I will comment on the lesson I observed first with the students telling them how good they were, or if I did not see many hands up when questions were being asked or when opinions were solicited. Then, I will talk with the teacher in private."

The principal received the lowest score in item #23 (mean = 1.91) which refers to the extent that she uses an instrument for classroom observation when evaluating teachers. Actually, this rating means "sometimes" (meaning that the principal sometimes uses such an instrument) which could be regarded as a big plus for the principal (if she really does use one) since no such instrument exists in the educational system of Cyprus and almost no principal or school inspector is trained how to observe, analyze and evaluate classroom instruction. Actually, this is a hot subject currently in Cyprus, and there is an ongoing debate about revamping the current system of teacher appraisal in Cyprus. Overall, the mean score for the category "Personnel Management" is 2.40 which means

that the principal exhibits the behaviors described in the items under this category to some extent.

5. Administration and Fiscal Management

The principal received very high marks in item #26 (mean = 3.82) in this area. Indeed, this item received the highest score of all 57 items in the questionnaire. The item deals with the extent to which the principal complies with Ministry of Education policies as well as school regulations in trying to fulfill the school's mission. Of course, this comes as a natural response from teachers since the educational system in Cyprus is so centralized and therefore, compliance with MOE directives is crucial, indeed vital, for the school's (and the principal's) survival.

The principal also received a low score in item #31 (mean = 2.52) which deals with how punctual the principal is and how much she respects other people's time when setting up appointments or when attending various functions. Apparently, teachers believe that sometimes the principal is punctual and sometimes she is not.

In any case, this is the area (administration and fiscal management) where the principal received the highest scores. For instance, she was awarded the highest scores (among all 57 items) in items #25, #26, #28, and #30 which all belong in this area and deal with issues such as making sure that all reports to the MOE are timely and accurate; preparing the school budget based on proven needs-according to MOE directives-and keeping proper accounts, books and receipts; and making sure that all school buildings and premises are kept in order and clean. Apparently, this is her strongest of all nine areas in the questionnaire.

This really comes as no surprise since it is what the principal kept stressing, i.e., that it is very important to "go by the laws", not to let anything happen by chance "otherwise they'll (Ministry officials) get you", and therefore, the principal was always aware of her rights and duties as prescribed in education regulations and in her job description of duties for the principal. Again, it should be emphasized that this should come as no surprise since Cyprus has such a centralized form of educational structures which do not allow any deviation from mainstream policies. Those who deviate will be ostracized (either formally or informally) and will not normally be allowed to continue their deviant policies.

6. Student Management

The principal received high scores in item #34 (mean = 3.46) which is the item dealing with the effectiveness of the principal when communicating with parents about their children either in assemblies or in private. This item also dealt with the extent to which the principal communicates both positive and negative aspects of student behavior to their parents.

More is said about this area in the section dealing with relations with parents and the community. What should be stressed here is that the principal did say (when asked), that if she walked in the school yard, almost all students would recognize her as being the principal. She tries to have a general assembly (with all 700 students) at least once a week and "...talk to them and with them. I believe in this kind of gatherings, for which I am well-prepared always in advance. I feel that some messages may not really go through, however, the school gets a feeling of being a whole and being tied together."

As mentioned under the area of "School Leadership and Management", and through the conversations with the principal, it was becoming more and more evident that she really follows the laws and regulations especially with regards to disciplining and managing the students. For instance, she mentioned an incident about a student having been caught with a ruler on which certain mathematics formulas were written during an examination. Even though they were erased, one could still see that some formulas had been written but then erased. In other words, one could still read them on the ruler. The student wasn't actually caught cheating, however, the teacher accused the student and did not allow him to take the exam. The principal however, insisted that the law stipulates that a student must be caught cheating and not prepared to cheat. Therefore, the principal took a different stand than the teacher. Moreover, during the interview, the principal said "I come from a family of lawyers, and therefore, I am sure of what the courts will do and how they will interpret the laws. Therefore, I always stick to what the law says."

The principal received low marks in item #38 (mean = 2.24) which deals with the extent to which she tries to connect what is being learned in the school with what is happening out of the school. Apparently, the staff believe that she is not really making an effort to do that. There was nothing in the conversation with the principal to either support or discard this impression. In any case, schools in Cyprus in general, are not really very prone on connecting with the "outside" world or with emphasizing "real life" skills. They are mostly disconnected with what goes on outside the school environment, and, therefore, no principal really has the time or the motivation to find out if what is being

done inside the school has any relevance to what is happening outside. Technical schools do have close connections with the outside world but there are only 11 such schools in Cyprus attended by only about 20-22 percent of students.

The overall mean score for the principal in this area was 2.86 which is a pretty good view of the principal, implying that the principal is good regarding student matters for most of the time. However, there is a small discrepancy with this view since the principal believes that her way of dealing with students is one of her strongest areas.

7. Professional Development and In-Service

The principal received the highest score in item #43 (mean = 2.96) in this area, which refers to the extent that the principal uses information she received during staff-development or in-service sessions for her own self-improvement. The perception of the staff is that she sometimes does use her own in-service in order to make improvements in her actual work environment. Apparently, the perception is that she is not really strong on doing this. The principal did not give any clear indication as to whether this is the case, however, when asked and prompted, she indicated that sometimes she will attend in-service sessions according to how much free time she has (and "there isn't much, being a mother and a wife also"). Furthermore, when asked if she has anyway of keeping abreast of new developments in her own teaching field or in school administration and management in general, the answer was "no".

In this area, she received lowest marks in item #44 (mean = 2.54) which deals with the extent to which she disseminates information and materials and introduces new ideas to other colleagues in order to solve common problems. Not much of this is being done either. In any case, there is not any organized in-service for teachers in Cyprus. Whatever is done is done in a haphazard way and as time permits. This somewhat low score is also in agreement with what the principal said regarding her own or her staff's development and in-service activities. As the principal said, she doesn't do it to the extent she would have liked due to lack of time.

The overall mean score for this area was 2.77 which indicates that the principal is only sometimes willing to use in-service for her own improvement or to help her staff. In any case, this view was in accordance with the principal's feelings that she doesn't do enough or almost any effort to organize more staff development for her own teachers.

8. Relations with Parents and the Community

The principal received the highest score in item #45 (mean = 3.48) in this area, where there is a clear indication that the principal often (or almost always) tries to encourage relations between the community, the parents and the school.

The staff's perception is in accordance with the principal's perceptions. She too emphasized that one of her strongest characteristics is her ability to communicate with parents. She actually said: "My ability to communicate with all factors and variables affecting the school and my cooperation both with personnel (secretarial and professional) as well as the students and their parents is great. I always give reasons and my true thoughts behind a decision; there is always a justification for whatever I do and I make sure that people understand it. Therefore, when discussing an issue, I put my justifications about an issue on the table to be judged by everyone. I will tell the truth and will not beautify the situation for anyone, albeit taking care not to hurt someone personally."

The principal received the lowest marks (but not really low) in item #49 (mean = 3.09) in this area, which indicates that she often uses appropriate techniques for further encouragement and development of these relations.

There were many instances and examples which the principal brought up during our discussions to indicate her willingness to talk with the students' parents when an important problem arose. She would talk things over together with the parent and the student in her office. She would make every effort possible to deal with the big problems in a fashion which would not hurt the student in the long run or in any permanent way. The overall mean score for this category was 3.25 which is one of the highest means she received and naturally it indicates that indeed this is one of the principal's strongest areas.

9. Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

The principal received the highest score in item #52 (mean = 2.97) in this area, which deals with the extent that she allows discussion and promotes the idea of searching for solutions and that she presents these as commonly accepted practices of this school. The staff's perception is that she often does that.

This was her own assessment as well. She mentioned that in the regular assemblies with teaching staff she would rarely present her opinions first. "Usually, I will introduce a subject and then I will be silent. I will let the rest of the teachers speak out their ideas until I see a consensus building up. If the issue is really divisive and there will have to be a vote, then I speak out my own opinion (always with full justification) in order to sway some of the undecided staff this or the other way. Then, we will take a vote in order to reach a decision. Often times, I will have what we call a pre-meeting with my 11 assistant principals and discuss a certain issue together before taking it to the whole assembly of the faculty."

The principal also received the lowest marks in item #55 (mean = 2.65) in this area, meaning that she is "sometimes" open to different approaches and solutions and does not insist on any one way of problem solving.

This perception of the principal by the teaching staff, comes in contrast to what the principal believes about herself, i.e., that she often listens to others' opinions and, as a result, changes her own ideas about an issue. For instance, she mentioned that if a student or a group of students come to her with problems or to make a report about something which is happening in their class, she will prompt them that the right way is to speak first to their own teacher who is responsible for their class, and then speak to the area assistant principal. If things do not work out in this way, then, they should come to her. In this way, students are given an array of options and approaches to their problems.

Another example she mentioned concerning the area of different problem-solving approaches is the following: "One day, one of the assistant principals came into my office and told me that parents are calling him at home because one of the teachers had an exam for the children without giving them any warning. Parents were upset and students were upset. The assistant principal said that the principal should call the teacher in and talk things over with her. The principal suggested instead that the assistant principal find out what really happened (by talking to the teacher as well and not just listen to parents and students), and then they would discuss the matter together. After about a week, I called the teacher in my office and told her what I would do if I were in her position, i.e., I would explain to kids that I feel I have to give them mock exams in order to get them prepared for when the real examinations come for entrance into the universities. She did that and she thanked me for this suggestion after she realized that the matter was resolved in a satisfactory manner." The overall mean score for this area

is 2.81 which is an indication that the principal is doing fine in this area, but that there is also some room for improvement.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the overall results presented above, it seems that there is some agreement and some disagreement between the teachers and the principal regarding the principal's view of herself and the teachers' perceptions of her. Generally speaking, in four out of the nine questionnaire areas there is agreement of views from both sides; in two areas there is disagreement and in three areas there is some agreement and some disagreement between the teachers' and the principal's perceptions of the school principal.

More specifically, the principal and the teachers are in agreement in the areas of school climate, curriculum development, student management, and relations with parents and the community. Both the teachers and the principal feel that there is a positive and humane overall climate in the school and the work environment in general. Furthermore, the perception is that there is enough room for curriculum development in their school even in a centralized system such as the system in Cyprus. The teachers" perception is that there is some freedom for new ideas and changes and some room for modifications with regards to the curriculum (to the extent possible of course). In addition, both parties agree that student management at the school is really good and that the principal deals with discipline problems and student issues in a satisfactory way. Finally, relations with parents and the community seem to be regarded as excellent, and indeed it was mentioned that this is one of the principal's strongest areas.

The areas in which the views of the principal and the views of the teachers are in disagreement are the areas of personnel management and professional development and in-service. From the answers given, it seems that the teachers feel that the principal's expectations about their performance are not really clear. Probably, this has to do with the non-existence of clear-cut performance standards and with the lack of training for principals as evaluators. On the other hand, the principal's perception was that she was clear about her standards and expectations of teachers. As for the area of professional development and in-service, the faculty thought that the principal only sometimes or rarely used her own training for her personal development whereas the principal thought that she often did that. Generally speaking, the perception among staff was that she doesn't use in-service for her own or/and her staff's improvement.

Finally, there were three areas in which there was some agreement and some disagreement as follows: the area of school leadership and management, the area of administration and fiscal management, and the area of problem-solving and decision-making. In the area of school leadership and management the teachers agree with the principal that she has excellent relations with the MOE, but they feel that there isn't really much support for experimentation and innovation and that the principal relies mostly on position authority in her leadership style. This later view is in contrast with what the principal feels of herself, i.e., that she allows freedom for experimentation and new ideas.

Furthermore, in the area of administration and fiscal management there is again agreement between the principal and her staff that she is good with laws, in complying with these and with other laws and regulations of the MOE, however, the staff feels that she is not good with her own time-management and punctuality in appointments. This is in disagreement with how the principal sees herself, i.e., that she is punctual and does not let people wait for appointments. Apparently, this is not the way the principal is being viewed and, therefore, she probably needs to address this area as well as some of the others mentioned above.

Finally, in the area of problem-solving and decision-making there is some agreement and some disagreement. Both the principal and faculty agree that the principal uses discussions and some kind of searching for solutions in trying to reach decisions. However, teachers also feel that the principal is not really open to different approaches and solutions, i.e., that she already has a fixed idea and this is what she will push for. In other words, they feel that the principal is not easily swayed or convinced and even though discussions will take place, in the end what will be done is what the principal probably had in mind from the beginning. This could be true, because to some extent, during our discussions, even the principal herself alluded to the fact that she is sometimes over-concentrating power near her and that she is being nosy. She also mentioned that she wants to change that.

Conclusion

It is increasingly becoming acknowledged that our perceptions are important as to how we view reality. It is also accepted that people will treat us or "sense us" based on their perceptions about us and not based on **our** perceptions about **us.** It is therefore, very important to know ourselves well-enough (through both introspection and extrospection) in order to be able to ask and answer: "What knowledge of self do I bring to the position? Is this knowledge sufficient? Can it help an organization realize its potential?

(Curry, 1997). I would even extent these questions a bit further: Am I aware of how others see me and how they actually perceive me as a leader? Indeed knowing the answer to these questions is crucial to the leader's self-awareness about the multiple realities of leadership and about the multiple perceptions of ourselves as leaders. Knowing and understanding the perceptions about us will help our knowledge and understanding about us as leaders.

In conclusion, the principal in this case probably needs to pay closer attention to making her expectations more clear; becoming more punctual with her appointments; using in-service and staff development more widely; and, finally listening to and accepting different views and approaches other than her own. If we were to quantify her perceptions with her staff's perceptions about her, I would argue that there is almost a 50-50 split, i.e., half of the time she is right and half of the time she is wrong on how her staff perceives her. I feel that this kind of knowledge is very important for our advancement to being a better and more reflective educational leader. I would argue that it is indeed crucial for our survival as leaders.

References

Curry, Barbara. (1997). The Life Experiences of Women and their Leadership Practice. International Studies in Educational Administration, 25 (2), 106-114.

Gronn, Peter and Peter Ribbins. (1996). Leaders in Context: Postpositivist Approaches to Understanding Educational Leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 32 (3), 452-473.

APPENDIX-Questionnaire

1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always

I. School Climate

1. Clearly states the school's mission.

2. Communicates and promotes high expectation levels for staff and student performance in an enabling, supportive way.

3. Provides recognition for excellence and achievement.

4. Leaves enough autonomy to teachers in order to organize and program their teaching.

5. Offers opportunities for dialogue and planning between groups, classes and lessons.

6. Mediates and facilitates effective resolution of conflicts in a timely fashion.

7. Promotes open communication and flexibility in relations with the staff as opposed to strict adherence to bureaucratic hierarchy.

8. Initiates and supports programs and actions that facilitate a positive, caring climate for learning and an orderly, purposeful environment.

II. School Leadership and Management

9. With the staff's cooperation creates a common vision for school improvement.

10. Encourages staff to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of this vision.

11. Presents his/her vision for the school to all educators in the school.

12. His/her values and vision are evident through the things he does, the way the principal spends his/her time and what he/she considers important.

13. Supports a culture where experiments and innovations are encouraged.

14. His/her authority is presented through his/her knowledge and abilities instead of his/her position authority.

15. Closely cooperates and contributes to the work of the Ministry of Education.

16. Identifies, analyzes, and applies research findings (e.g., effective school research correlates) to facilitate school improvement.

III. Curriculum Development

17. Ensures that curriculum renewal is continuous and responsive to student needs.

18. Provides instructional resources and materials to support teaching staff in accomplishing instructional goals.

19. Systematically and continuously monitors instructional and managerial processes to ensure that program activities are related to program outcomes; uses these findings for corrective action and improvement, as well as for recognition of success.

20. Effectively administers and integrates all special programs with the regular program.

IV. Personnel Management

21. Uses developmental evaluation effectively and comprehensively with all staff by systematically observing instruction, recording observations, and regularly conducting formative and summative evaluation conferences.

22. Confers with subordinates regarding their professional growth; works jointly with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals.

23. Uses a specific teacher observation instrument and ensures that evaluations clearly and accurately represent staff performance.

24. Clearly defines expectations for staff performance regarding instructional strategies, classroom management and communication with the public.

V. Administration and Fiscal Management

25. Makes sure that different reports to the Ministry of Education are accurate and are timely submitted.

26. Complies with educational policies, as well as laws and regulations, in pursuing the mission of the school.

27. Is effective in scheduling activities and the use of resources needed to accomplish determined goals.

28. Develops budgets based upon documented program needs, estimated enrollment, personnel and other fiscal needs; implements programs within budget limits; maintains fiscal control; accurately reports fiscal information.

29. Monitors the use, care and replacement of capital equipment.

30. Manages all school facilities effectively; efficiently supervises their maintenance to ensure clean, orderly and safe buildings and grounds.

31. Displays respect for other people' s time by being punctual to district and committee meetings. Responds to time limits for breaks and gives attention to proceedings.

VI. Student Management

32. Effectively develops and communicates to students, staff and parents school guidelines for student conduct.

33. Insures that school rules are uniformly observed and that consequences of misconduct are applied equitably to all students.

34. Effectively conducts conferences with parents, students and teachers concerning school and student issues, conveying both the positive aspects of student behavior as well as problem areas.

35. Protects learning time and teachers from outside and unnecessary interruptions.

36. Tries to implement such teaching methods where "higher order form of learning" is facilitated.

37. Promotes such practices so as to help implement and use knowledge in a variety of forms.

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38. Promotes the interconnection of learning experiences in the school with practices which are followed outside the school.

39. Encourages and he/she is a good example of life-long learning using new ideas as well as successes and failures as examples.

40. Maintains student folders which contain the required data to document placement in a program that deviates from regular/mainstreamed education.

VII. Professional Development and In-service

41. Uses information which accrues from school inspections and other teacher appraisal in order to improve personnel.

42. Strives to improve leadership skills through self-initiated professional development activities.

43. Utilizes information and insights gained in professional development programs for self-improvement.

44. Disseminates ideas and information to other professionals; provides leadership in addressing the challenges facing the profession.

VIII. Relations with Parents and the Community

45. Encourages relations between the school on one hand and the community and parents on the other.

46. Promotes cooperation with other organizations and businesses from the community so that students' needs are addressed.

47. Creates such relations with the community and parents so that they are encouraged to participate in decision making within the school.

48. Demonstrates awareness of school/community needs and initiates activities to meet those identified needs.

49. Demonstrates the use of appropriate and effective techniques for community and parent involvement.

50. Emphasizes and nurtures two-way communication between the school and community.

51. Projects a positive image to the community.

IX. Problem-solving and Decision-Making

52. Presents discussion and searching for solutions as commonly accepted practices within the school.

53. Shares information and facilitates decision-making among all personnel.

54. Solves problems in a cooperative way with teachers.

55. Is open to different approaches and solutions and does not insist in any one way of solving problems.

56. Tries to listen to many views and ideas before solving important problems.

57. Implements decision-making processes which are participative as opposed to autocratic.

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